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News

Police set to pounce on bikies under new laws

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Police will apply to ban a major outlaw bikie gang under the Government's new anti-association laws. Picture: Tony Gough
Source: Herald Sun

POLICE will apply to ban a major outlaw bikie gang under the Government's new anti-association laws within weeks.

The force has been working on an application to put before the Supreme Court to declare a bikie club a criminal organisation, banning members from associating or wearing club patches.

The Hells Angels, Bandidos, Comancheros and Finks are considered the most likely to be declared a criminal organisation, although police will not reveal which of Victoria's clubs they are considering.

The move comes as the force welcomed more powers to deal with gangs after the State Government passed legislation yesterday to force gangs to tear down "intimidating" fortifications.

Up to six fortified sites, all believed to be outlaw bikie clubhouses, have already been identified as being used for organised crime.

Under the legislation, police will be able to apply to a magistrate for an order to have fortifications removed from properties if they can be linked to organised crime.

The clubs have three months to obey a magistrates' court order to pull them down.

Victoria Police Deputy Commissioner Graham Ashton said the Hells Angels and Bandidos - who declared war on each other last month - were "top of the list".

Mr Ashton said removing fortifications may "de-escalate" the threat of violence between the clubs and would stop bikie members destroying evidence as police executed warrants.

"I think our clear preference is that they weren't warring in the first place," he said.

"That's (no fortifications) going to place more pressure on them not to engage in the sort of threats and behaviour when they know that they can't hide behind thick, impenetrable walls."

Mr Ashton said the laws would complement each other in the fight against organised crime as he revealed they were closer to pursuing an established outlaw bikie club.

"We are in the process now of preparing applications to go before the court under those powers as well," he said.

"In the future, we won't be just restricting it to bikie gangs but we do need to show criminal links."



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